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14. ABSTRACT The United States Congress recently altered the strategic direction of the Department of Defense's personnel accounting community. The Fiscal Year 2010 Budget contained a mandate that requires the yearly output rate of identifications per year to increase to 200 by 2015. In comparison, the personnel accounting community has only averaged 72 identifications per year for the last five years. The delta in the number of identifications presents a significant challenge to the accounting community and the Geographic Combatant Commanders to develop a comprehensive plan to meet future output requirements. As a preliminary undertaking, the accounting community should revise Joint Publication 4-06 (Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations) in order to accurately reflect the current political environment and the new strategic goals of the accounting community. This paper identifies how the current doctrine fails to tie the strategic personnel accounting goals mandated by Congress with the operational and tactical requirements of the operational commanders to accomplish the mission. Specifically, a revised doctrine should address the new strategic goals of the accounting community and align the roles and responsibilities of the Geographic Combatant Commanders, define the authorities for the accounting community and establish a baseline for unit training requirements in order to support the expanded personnel accounting mission.					
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**The Need for a Revised Joint Personnel Accounting Doctrine**

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**Major / US Army**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**22 May 2011**

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## **Abstract**

The United States Congress recently altered the strategic direction of the Department of Defense's personnel accounting community. The Fiscal Year 2010 Budget contained a mandate that requires the yearly output rate of identifications per year to increase to 200 by 2015. In comparison, the personnel accounting community has only averaged 72 identifications per year for the last five years. The delta in the number of identifications presents a significant challenge to the accounting community and the Geographic Combatant Commanders to develop a comprehensive plan to meet future output requirements. As a preliminary undertaking, the accounting community should revise Joint Publication 4-06 (Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations) in order to accurately reflect the current political environment and the new strategic goals of the accounting community. This paper identifies how the current doctrine fails to tie the strategic personnel accounting goals mandated by Congress with the operational and tactical requirements of the operational commanders to accomplish the mission. Specifically, a revised doctrine should address the new strategic goals of the accounting community and align the roles and responsibilities of the Geographic Combatant Commanders, define the authorities for the accounting community and establish a baseline for unit training requirements in order to support the expanded personnel accounting mission.

*"Until every story ends" is a solemn promise to those who wear the uniform of the United States that they will never be left behind or forgotten... As a grateful Nation, we can never repay the profound debt to our heroes, and we will not rest until we have accounted for the missing members of our Armed Forces."*<sup>1</sup> President Barack Obama; proclaiming 17 September 2010 as National POW / MIA Recognition Day.

## **Introduction and Thesis**

According to Department of Defense (DOD) policy, "accounting for personnel lost as a result of hostile acts is of the highest national priority."<sup>2</sup> However, the current personnel accounting mission joint doctrine, as contained in Joint Publication (JP) 4-06 (Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations), fails to adequately address the most recent strategic undertaking of the United States to increase the yearly output of identifications and "obtain the fullest possible accounting for Americans held captive or otherwise missing from our nation's past conflicts."<sup>3</sup> The doctrine lacks the explicit guidance and direction that ties the current national strategic personnel accounting goals mandated by the United States Congress with the operational and tactical requirements of the operational commanders to accomplish the mission. *Given this challenge, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) should expand Joint Publication 4-06 (Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations) and develop a comprehensive doctrine for the POW / MIA accounting mission that aligns the future accounting roles and responsibilities of the Geographic Combatant Commanders, defines the authorities for the accounting community and establishes a baseline for unit training requirements.* This paper argues how the recent change in legislation challenges the personnel accounting community to meet the goals mandated by Congress and that the current doctrine is not aligned with the new strategic direction of the

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<sup>1</sup> The White House, President Barack Obama official website, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/16/presidential-proclamation-national-powmia-recognition-day> (Accessed 26 April 2011).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Personnel Accounting – Losses Due to Hostile Acts*, Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 2310.07E, (Washington, DC: DOD, 21 August 2007,) 2.

<sup>3</sup> Defense Prisoner of War / Missing Personnel Office official website, [http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/personnel\\_accounting](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/personnel_accounting) (Accessed 15 February 11).

nation. As a preliminary undertaking, the accounting community should revise the current doctrine in order to have the most suitable manual primed to support the mission before the mandates go into effect.

### **Background**

The Defense Prisoner of War / Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), the national organization responsible for all personnel accounting matters, currently estimates that there are still more than “83,000 Americans [that] remain missing from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War.”<sup>4</sup> The breakdown based on the conflict and numbers of unaccounted are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary Statistics of Unaccounted for Personnel and Associated Conflict (as of 2 March 2011)

	WWII	Korean War	Cold War	Vietnam War	Desert Storm	Total
Unaccounted For						
Total MIA	73,792	8,003	127	1,693	0	83,615

The United States Congress has supported the mission to account for missing Americans since its inception and has allocated the means to support the DOD effort in order for the accounting community to function. Recently, the Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, which contained personnel accounting goals to be met by the accounting community as a whole. The language in the bill mandated the accounting community to increase the number of identified personnel to at least 200 persons annually by the year 2015. In doing so, the legislators recognized the requirement to “provide such funds, personnel, and resources as the Secretary of Defense considers appropriate to increase significantly the capability and capacity of the DOD, the Armed forces, and commanders of the combatant commands to account

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<sup>4</sup> Defense Prisoner of War / Missing Personnel Office official website, [http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/personnel\\_accounting](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/personnel_accounting) (Accessed 15 February 11).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

for missing persons.”<sup>6</sup> The Committee on Armed Services, in their additional and supplemental views of the FY10 budget, went one step further and recommended that the Secretary of Defense also recognize the requirements for a goal of 350 personnel accounted for per year by the year 2020.<sup>7</sup> In comparison to the recent trends for the accounting community, which only averaged 72 identifications per year from 2004 -2008 (See Table 2 below), accounting for 200 personnel per year by 2015 and 350 personnel per year by 2020 represent an increase of 277% and 486% respectively within the next five to ten years.

Table 2: JPAC Identification by Calendar Year and Conflict

	WWII	Korea	Vietnam	Total for 3 Conflicts	Total
2004	13	10	28	51	51
2005	47	9	29	85	87
2006	34	20	27	81	82
2007	24	20	18	62	62
2008	27	24	26	77	80
Total	145	83	128	356	362
Average over 5 years	29	17	26	71	72

This was an unprecedented directive from the United States Congress as JPAC has historically attempted to maximize its identification capacity per year given the resources and manpower available to conduct investigations and recovery operations around the world. This was the first time the US Congress had actually set a benchmark for yearly output. Thus an issue arises as to whether or not the current joint doctrine for the personnel accounting community is adequate to meet the demands imposed given the significant delta in the yearly output requirements being mandated by the law that goes into effect in 2015.

<sup>6</sup> *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010*, H.R. 2647, 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., *Congressional Record* 111, (18 June 2009): 109.

<sup>7</sup> *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, Report of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives on H.R. 2647 together with Additional and Supplemental Views*, H.R. 2647, 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, *Congressional Record* 111, (18 June 2009): 323.



## **Strategy for Change**

The current JPAC commander, Major General Stephen Tom, captured the essence of the strategy for doctrinal change in his January 2010 annual report stating that “action is required immediately in order to generate the required *inputs* to accomplish such an increase in *output* and productivity.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, an increase in recovery operations (*inputs*) would be needed to increase the number of remains of unaccounted personnel the Central Identification Lab could process for identification (*outputs*). As a result, the Accounting Community must increase the aggregate number of recovery operations conducted *globally* in order to yield more results. A global increase in operations of this nature would logically lend itself to a need for expanded roles and responsibilities, clear lines of authority and additional resources that are trained and available throughout the world.

Historically, the accounting community focused their effort within the Pacific Command (PACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) in order to account for missing personnel from the Vietnam conflict in Southeast Asia. However, the *output* requirements mandated by Congress drive the global nature of the mission so that other combatant commander AORs (e.g. EUCOM), where the nation had large losses like those associated with World War II, become key to meeting the newly established goals. For the Geographical Combatant Commanders (GCCs), this means an increase in competing requirements for priorities and personnel that could otherwise be tasked from their subordinate units. Thus, these reasons reinforce the rationale for having a clearly established personnel accounting joint doctrine in place prior to when the new accounting goals go into effect in 2015 that addresses the roles and responsibilities, lines of authority and trained personnel required to support the mission.

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<sup>8</sup> Major General Stephen D. Tom, “Joint POW / MIA Accounting Command FY 2010 Annual Report,” January 2011, 25.

## **Aligning Roles and Responsibilities**

The current Joint Doctrine, JP 4-06 (Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations) fails to specifically address the operational commander's roles and responsibilities with respect to the personnel accounting mission. At best, it outlines their duties to respond to mortuary affairs requirements during current and active conflicts within their respective Services. The responsibilities for post hostility recovery operations are only outlined briefly with the mention of the Joint POW / MIA Accounting Command as the organization that "has the mission to search, recover, and identify the human remains from previous wars."<sup>9</sup> The current doctrine does not link the operational commander's responsibilities in support of the JPAC and its mission to account for personnel lost from past conflicts.

The mission of accounting for missing Americans is assigned to a Department of Defense (DOD) Prisoner of War (POW) / Missing in Action (MIA) accounting community, which is coordinated by the Defense Prisoner of War / Missing Personnel Office's (DPMO). The other members include the "the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL), the Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory of the Air Force (LSEL), the casualty and mortuary affairs offices of the military departments, and any other element of the Department of Defense whose mission (as designated by the Secretary of Defense) involves the accounting for and recovery of members of the armed forces who are missing in action, prisoners of war, or unaccounted for."<sup>10</sup>

Based on the new strategic direction of the country, the POW / MIA accounting mission is a national priority effort that will receive more resources allocated to it in the future in order to

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 4-06 (Washington DC: CJCS, 2006), I-9.

<sup>10</sup> "Missing Persons," *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 10, subtitle A, part II, chapter 76, section 1509, 1 February 2010.

achieve the accounting benchmarks directed by Congress. This will become even more apparent as the efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan slowly reach a culmination and the US enters an interwar period. Without clearly delineated roles and responsibilities outlined in a joint doctrine, the operational commanders will not be adequately equipped to support the accounting community's increase in future accounting goals. In addition, based on the requirement to produce more outputs globally, more operational commanders will experience an increase in the accounting effort within their areas of responsibility.

For example, a team of researchers from the Institute for Defense Analysis conducted an assessment in June 2009 on the feasibility of the Central Identification Lab being able to increase their identification rates to meet the goals laid out by the recent Congressional legislation. One of the research team's areas of focus was the significant concentration of missing personnel associated with cases from World War II in both the Pacific and European theaters. By sheer numbers alone, the accounting community estimated that there are 74,064 missing personnel associated with cases from World War II, of which as many as 20,000 individuals could eventually be accounted for, since a majority were lost over deep water and have been deemed unrecoverable.<sup>11</sup>

The research team also considered the effects of keeping the number of recovery operations conducted by the Joint POW / MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) per year constant and what effects this would have on reaching the prescribed accounting goals by 2015. Considering JPAC averaged 40 Joint Field Activities per year for the last five years, the team recommended "redirecting resources from Southeast Asian recoveries to field operations for the

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<sup>11</sup> David R. Graham, Ashley N. Bybee, Susan L. Clark-Sestak, and Michal S. Finnin, *Assessment of DOD Central Identification Lab and the Feasibility of Increasing Identification Rate*, (Alexandria, Virginia: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2009), 63.

other conflicts with a higher probability of remains recovery”<sup>12</sup> in order to have a better chance of meeting the future Congressional benchmarks. With the challenge of meeting the future accounting goals laid out by Congress in the FY10 budget, it would make sense to shift the priority of effort to where the most likely area of operations would yield the most results. Therefore, if the number of recovery operations remained constant, one option to achieve the future accounting goals would be to concentrate solely on the conflicts associated with the most missing Americans. If this recommendation is implemented, the PACOM and EUCOM staff specifically, would be impacted with an increase in the number of recovery operations that would occur in their Area of Responsibility. However, a complete shift of resources to support mainly World War II cases is probably not feasible, considering the negative political backlash from the family members associated with cases from other conflicts. Thus there needs to be a delicate balance in the increase of resources supporting the World War II effort while also maintaining a presence in Southeast Asia in support of the missing personnel from the Vietnam and Korean conflicts.

Considering the strategic vision of the DPMO and the recommendations by the research team from the Institute for Defense Analyses to expand the accounting effort, the CJCS should revise JP 4-06 (Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations) and develop a comprehensive doctrine that defines the roles and responsibilities of the GCCs for the personnel accounting mission. The GCCs affected by the global increase and expansion of the personnel accounting effort need a revised joint doctrine that anticipates the impending increase in the number of recovery operations and resources that will be required to meet the accounting goals of the future. The doctrine would synchronize the national personnel accounting strategy and objectives of the nation with the operational and tactical requirements in a formal document that can be referenced

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 62.

by the operational commander. It would clearly articulate how the GCCs and operational commanders are required to support the accounting community's effort to reach the goals mandated by Congress. Lastly, a focused doctrine on all aspects of the personnel accounting mission would support the DPMO's strategic need for finding ways to improve mission accomplishment and streamline the overall operation to ensure the utmost effectiveness and efficiency of the mission.

### **Clear Lines of Authority**

The authorities the JPAC has for controlling and directing forces in support of the personnel accounting mission are another striking omission within JP 4-06. JPAC is currently the operational arm for the accounting community. The Department of Defense "merged the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii which was established in 1976 with the Joint Task Force - Full Accounting which was created in 1992, to create the JPAC on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003."<sup>13</sup> The JPAC has outlived the designation as a temporary Joint Task Force and will remain the lead executive agency for the foreseeable future. To this end, a revised doctrine needs to define the lines of authorities of the JPAC within the accounting community and throughout the DOD. This is especially relevant when the issue of tasking personnel and resources to support the accounting mission conflicts with the authorities of the GCCs to direct their own forces.

Within the last five years, JPAC was essentially given functional Combatant Command authority over personnel accounting matters pertaining to losses due to hostile acts.<sup>14</sup> Since 2007, when the Department of Defense Directive for Personnel Accounting – Losses due to

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<sup>13</sup> Joint POW / MIA Accounting Command official website. <http://www.jpac.pacom.mil/> (Accessed 15 February 2011).

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Personnel Accounting – Losses Due to Hostile Acts*, Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 2310.07E, (Washington, DC: DOD, 21 August 2007), 7.

Hostile Acts was published, the command has had an opportunity to determine how to efficiently and effectively manage the forces of the military in support of the accounting mission. A comprehensive doctrine for the accounting community would reflect the JPAC's best practices, despite the relatively short history of the command. With the experience of the last eight years, the JPAC has the inherent knowledge on what the accounting community needs in terms of resource requirements that could support the future goals of the accounting community. The lessons learned, according to Milan Vego, are "a proven and inestimable value for modifying or improving existing doctrine or creating new doctrine."<sup>15</sup> This supports the overall argument for the establishment of a joint doctrine that designates the JPAC lines of authority over other forces sooner rather than later. It is even more critical when considering the national strategic shift in political support for the yearly accounting goals mandated in the current legislation and how this will challenge the force as a whole to meet those requirements.

JPAC, with a budget of \$50 million / year, is manned with nearly 400 personnel, which includes members from all different services, DOD Civilians, and the Central Identification Lab scientific staff.<sup>16</sup> Despite their budget and force strength, the command relies on outsourcing the various military occupational specialties from the Services in order to support their mission. The requirement to task individuals or units is the main source of friction with other operational commanders because the authorities of the JPAC are not clearly defined within the joint doctrine. Again, this will be especially critical as the accounting mission expands to more activities per year and inherently requires more forces to support the national undertaking.

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<sup>15</sup> Milan Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2009), XI-43.

<sup>16</sup> David R. Graham, Ashley N. Bybee, Susan L. Clark-Sestak, and Michal S. Finnin, *Assessment of DOD Central Identification Lab and the Feasibility of Increasing Identification Rate*, (Alexandria, Virginia: Institute for Defense Analyses, 2009), 2.

For example, a typical recovery team usually has fourteen people assigned to a mission. The team leader and team sergeant, usually an O-3 and E-7 respectively, can be from any Service of the military, but are organic to JPAC. The forensic anthropologist, who leads the overall excavation effort of the recovery site, is also assigned to JPAC and comes from the Central Identification Lab in Hawaii. The other team members include personnel that have language, medical, life support, forensic photography, explosive ordnance disposal, and communications specialties. Although JPAC has a small cadre of Service members in each specialty assigned to the command, it cannot internally resource all of the manpower requirements with assigned personnel to conduct all of the missions that JPAC conducts. These shortages are even more pronounced when the JPAC conducts very unique operations in high altitudes or underwater, and needs to task specialized units in the fields of mountaineering or military diving. Given the current force structure constraints already existing within the accounting community, unless JPAC grows internally to support the anticipated trend of increased number of recovery operations, the force requirements required from other units to support the mission will increase dramatically as well.

Some of the many challenges that the JPAC faced in the last eight years during its tasking and manning conferences were a direct result of the competing demands that the GCCs had with respect to the current operational requirements in Iraq and Afghanistan. The accounting community will face even more adversity as it attempts to request additional forces to meet future accounting goals from a military that already has limited capacity to support. Given this compounding challenge, a revised joint doctrine for the accounting community is necessary to outline the specific command authorities that the JPAC would have with respect to tasking the personnel from the other GCCs in order to meet the future accounting goals. In a manner similar

to how JP 3-50 (Personnel Recovery) defines its command authorities in Chapter III, a comprehensive doctrine for the personnel accounting community would need to delineate the command relationships in order to “facilitate the synchronization and integration of the [accounting] operations”<sup>17</sup> with the other GCCs.

Defining the command relationships is vitally important when GCCs are determining how to earmark funds in support of JPAC as their forces are tasked to conduct accounting operations. While JPAC has functional COCOM authority over all matters relating to losses due to hostile acts, it is imperative that the CJCS and his staff define in doctrine the level of control the accounting community has over the units and forces in support of the accounting missions. JPAC technically takes OPCON over the forces it tasks when they arrive at their Headquarters in Hawaii, which by definition is the “authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations and joint training necessary to accomplish missions assigned to the command.”<sup>18</sup> This relationship needs to be captured in the joint doctrine for the accounting community so that the GCCs understand where the JPAC’s authorities originate, and what control JPAC would have over the forces assigned to the command in support of their accounting efforts. It would also be important to officially define how the GCCs would have to support financially, so they can appropriately budget their annual requirements against the accounting community’s demands in the future. Their budgets could be significantly affected, especially if the trend for forces required to support the accounting community is moving towards substantial growth in order to meet the accounting goals of the future. The joint doctrine would serve as the official document

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<sup>17</sup> Chairman, U.S Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Personnel Recovery*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-50 (Washington DC: CJCS, 5 January 2007) III-1.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Army, *Operational Law Handbook*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: International and Operational Law Department, The Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School, 2008), 57.



that justifies the increase in allocations within the GCCs budgets that will be needed to support the future personnel accounting mission and goals.

### **Trained Personnel**

As the nation increases the awareness of the accounting mission, establishing a baseline of training requirements for the forces tasked to support the mission is another reason why joint doctrine for the personnel accounting community should be revised. A training enclosure would effectively mandate a personnel accounting executive agent to coordinate the requirements across the Services on behalf of the Department of Defense. While each Service brings a specific military occupational specialty to the recovery team effort, some of the intangible skills for success are never formalized or are only learned through on the job experiences during the conduct of actual recovery operations. In a manner similar to how the personnel recovery community has been able to spread Code of Conduct and basic Survival Evasion Resistance and Extraction (SERE) training to the lowest level, a personnel accounting community doctrine could also proscribe requirements for best practices and training requirements to be implemented. The training requirements for the personnel recovery community are contained within their doctrine, in both the Joint Publication 3-50 (Personnel Recovery) and the Army Regulation 525-28 (Personnel Recovery). Thus, there is precedence for including the training requirements within a future joint doctrine for personnel accounting operations.

The personnel accounting mission inherently involves interactions with foreign nationals because of the nature of where the battlefield losses occurred. The need for basic cultural sensitivity and language training should be incorporated into the development of the joint doctrine for personnel accounting. In a recent article from the spring 2010 issue of *Parameters*, a Special Operations Forces commander recognized the importance of cultural immersion

because it taught officers “how to interact with other cultures, cultivating patience, humility, and curiosity.”<sup>19</sup> In addition to cultural immersion training, there is also a requirement for how to conduct recovery operations, succeed in negotiating and contracting, and effectively communicating through interpreters; all of which are critical skills for ensuring the teams are operating as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Not only are these skills critical to success in the accounting community, but they translate across the spectrum of military training that has been a crucial aspect of successful operations in Iraq and Afghanistan for the last decade. By including requirements for cultural awareness, language, and negotiation training within the joint doctrine for personnel accounting, it would mandate the GCCs and their respective service component commanders implement programs to train their forces once tasked to support the accounting mission at the individual, collective unit, staff, and senior command level. This will not only support the personnel accounting mission, but would also broaden the skills of the force in general when leaders are placed in situations that require them to recognize the cultural nuances required to be successful.

Further, in support of the DPMO’s effort to maintain international relationships with nations that have linkages to accounting efforts, a revised joint doctrine would support the need for the GCCs and their staffs to understand the strategic communication message in support of the accounting mission. The GCCs are a critical node within the international environment and have substantial influence with foreign nations within their AORs, both positively and negatively. As the mission of the accounting community expands globally, the requirement to establish and maintain positive relations with other nations that have the potential for future recovery operations will increase considerably. The accounting community’s goals would be

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<sup>19</sup> Barak Salamoni, Jessica Hart, Renny & Winn McPhearson, Kirby Aiden, “Growing Strategic Leaders for Future Conflict,” *Parameters* (Spring 2010): 80.

one of the many talking points whereby military leaders could help create and foster cooperation efforts that might otherwise not exist.

The strained relationship between the US and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) is one example of how a bad relationship has detracted from the accounting community's ability to achieve their goals. There are over 8,000 cases associated with the Korean War, but since 2005, the accounting community has been unable to conduct operations in the DPRK because of the restrictions imposed by both countries. Even though there are recovery operations planned for areas in the DPRK that could support the accounting goals, those potential cases may never materialize until relations improve.

### **Counterargument**

The most glaring counterargument for the proposal to expand and develop joint doctrine for the personnel accounting community and essentially elevate the priority of the mission is the competition for resources in support of the most current and dangerous threats the nation faces today. Some would argue that the amount of money spent on searching for MIAs is wasteful considering the military is currently engaged in two Theaters of Operations; Iraq and Afghanistan. It is also very difficult to even begin to try and define how much effort the nation should dedicate to unresolved cases for individuals that remain unaccounted for from previous conflicts. How can you begin to set a dollar amount on the value of one person's remains that fought and died for their country over 60 years ago?

Secondly, operational commanders have to prioritize their training efforts. Including additional training requirements in support of a niche operation would have a difficult time making it on the training calendars for most organizations. Many argue that the personnel accounting mission will always remain subservient to the priority of current operations. It is

challenging to convince operational commanders to support the accounting effort when their forces are concentrating on current training and other relevant operational requirements in support of their traditional combat mission. This has been especially evident in the current operating environment since the nation expects the military to continue to perform with less. The competition for time and human capital is at an all time high and the additional accounting goals mandated by Congress will unquestionably continue to stress the resources of the military.

Lastly, the public support for the accounting mission is not as strong as it was 30 years ago when it peaked after the end of the Vietnam conflict.<sup>20</sup> The majority of support for the mission is sustained through the families of those still unaccounted for. Unfortunately, the first generation family members of those missing from World War II, Korea, the Cold War, and Vietnam are slowly passing away. Some would argue that the value of continuing to search for the remains of lost grandfathers and great-grandfathers has considerably lost its significance with respect to bringing closure for the current generation. There is a tendency for the younger generation to accept the fate of their relatives and move on with their lives.

### **Recommendations**

Despite the competition for military resources in support of the current global requirements, the U.S. Congress acknowledged a requirement to fulfill the personnel accounting mission by increasing its support with its most recent legislation. The allocation of the necessary resources to support an increase in identifications per year over the next 5-10 years is evidence of their commitment to making the accounting efforts a strategic goal of the nation. The declining trend in immediate family members that are directly affected as a result of the personnel accounting effort also supports the need to elevate the priority of the mission sooner rather than

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<sup>20</sup> The Defense Prisoner of War / Missing Personnel Office, *Personnel Accounting Community Strategy* (Washington, DC, January 2009), 11.

later in order to resolve as many cases before it becomes physically impossible. In her annual report in January 2010, the former commander of JPAC, RADM Donna Crisp, emphasized the need to accomplish the personnel accounting mission since “global economic development is rapidly changing the landscape for effecting fruitful recovery operations.”<sup>21</sup> As sites are lost due to global development, the nation squanders more opportunities to complete its mission and bring answers to those family members still waiting.

The CJCS and the accounting community should take advantage of the increase in political support by being proactive in revising the current joint doctrine before the new accounting goals go into effect. This effort would not only bring awareness to operational commanders but it would also link the strategic objectives of the nation with the tactical execution of the recovery operations around the world. A comprehensive doctrine would serve as a foundational reference for the operational commanders and the accounting community as they continue to find ways to resource the requirements to meet the future accounting goals.

During the surge of national support for the accounting effort over the next 5-10 years, the JPAC should also examine their force structure and Joint Manning Document to ensure that it is appropriate to meet the future demands of the nation. As the trend continues for more recovery operations overall to meet the accounting goals mandated by Congress, it would be appropriate to build the internal capacity of the command to meet those requirements from within the organization. Although there will always continue to be a need for outsourcing forces and capabilities from other commands, an internal increase in manning would help mitigate the impact across the Services as they continue to train for other operational requirements.

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<sup>21</sup> Rear Admiral Donna Crisp, “Joint POW / MIA Accounting Command FY 2009 Annual Report,” 25 January 2010, 28.

The accounting community should also incorporate training requirements within the doctrine that focus on the cultural immersion skills necessary to support the recovery operations around the globe. The JPAC, with its history as the operational arm of the accounting mission, would be the most likely candidate to draw lessons learned from their best practices for the skills required to conduct successful recovery operations.

A final recommendation would be to increase the number of forward deployed detachments, specifically within the EUCOM AOR, to support the foreseeable surge in recovery operations of Cold War and World War II cases within that theater. Currently, the accounting community has three forward detachments; Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, that serve as critical nodes for processing administrative and customs requirements of incoming recovery teams, planning and executing missions, and providing logistical support of teams in country.<sup>22</sup> An additional detachment would concentrate solely on cases outside of the Southeast Asian conflict while remaining consistent with the strategic expansion of the accounting mission to cases involving World War II and Cold War losses.

## **Conclusion**

As the accounting community identifies the ways and means to meet the future accounting goals mandated by the US Congress, the revision and development of a comprehensive joint doctrine for the personnel accounting mission should be one of the initial steps in the process. Establishing a joint doctrine for the accounting community would elevate the priority of the mission and take advantage of an impending interwar period by utilizing the resources that have supported the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for the last decade. A refined joint doctrine would more accurately reflect the current political environment by codifying the

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<sup>22</sup> Joint POW / MIA Accounting Command official website. <http://www.jpac.pacom.mil/> (Accessed 15 February 2011).

strategic goals of the accounting community based upon the most recent legislation enacted by the US Congress. It would support the strategic challenge laid out by the DPMO for finding ways to optimize the accounting effort. The doctrine would bring awareness to the GCCs and operational commanders of their future budgetary and force commitments while tying the national strategic goals with their tactical requirements in support of the accounting mission. Joint doctrine would also establish the command and control relationships of the accounting community, and more specifically outline the authorities of the JPAC as it continues to serve as the subunified command for all matters relating to lost personnel from past conflicts. The doctrine would define the level of control the accounting community would have over the forces tasked to support the anticipated increase in recovery operations that will be needed to meet the future accounting goals. Lastly, the accounting community could take the lead in introducing training requirements within the doctrine to support focused training throughout the Services to increase the cultural awareness and other relevant skills that would support successful recovery operations. This training would not only support the accounting effort, but also prepare the military as whole for future global requirements. With these doctrinal implementations, the accounting community would be postured to meet the future accounting goals as the nation continues to acknowledge its responsibility to our Fallen and their Families.

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